

[Acr I

*Lady Windermere.* But what is it, Duchess?*Duchess of Berwick.* Don't you really know? I

we're all so distressed about it. Only last night at dear

Lady Jansen's every one was saying how extraordinary it was that, of all men in London, Windermere should behave in such a way.

*Lady Windermere.* My husband—what has he got to do with any woman of that kind?*Duchess of Berwick.* Ah, what indeed, dear? That is the point.

He goes to see her continually, and stops for hours at a time, and while he is there she is not at home to any one. Not

that many ladies call on her, my dear, but she has a great many disreputable men friends—my own brother particularly,

as I told you—and that is what makes it so dreadful about

Windermere. We looked upon him as being such a model

husband, but I am afraid there is no doubt about it. My

dear nieces—you know the Saville girls, don't you?—such

nice domestic creatures—plain, dreadfully plain, but so

good—well, they're always at the window doing fancy work,

and making ugly things for the poor, which I think so useful

of them in these dreadful socialistic days, and this terrible

woman has taken a house in Curzon Street, right opposite

them—such a respectable street, too! I don't know what

we're coming to! And they tell me that Windermere goes

there four and five times a week—they see him. They

can't help it—and although they never talk scandal, they—

well, of course—they remark on it to every one. And the

worst of it all is that I have been told that this woman has

got a great deal of money out of somebody, for it seems that

she came to London six months ago without anything at all

to speak of, and now she has this charming house in Mayfair,

drives her ponies in the Park every afternoon and all—well,

all—since she has known poor dear Windermere.

*Lady Windermere.* Oh, I can't believe it!*Duchess of Berwick.* But it's quite true, my dear. The whole

of London knows it. That is why I felt it was better to

come and talk to you, and advise you to take Windermere

away at once to Homburg or to Aix, where he'll have some-

thing to amuse him, and where you can watch him all day

long. I assure you, my dear, that on several occasions after

I was first married, I had to pretend to be very ill, and was

obliged to drink the most unpleasant mineral waters, merely